

And somebody knew that he was up to that, and they wanted to stop him from doing it; so they spied on the campaign so he wouldn't be elected. And once he was elected, they spied on the Executive Office to see what they could do.

I remember a story that a friend of mine told me about talking to some Democratic Senator in February of 2017, who told that friend of mine that Trump would not be President by the end of that year of 2017. Now, whether that Senator knew what he was talking about, I don't know; but I reflect back on that conversation I had with that friend, and I wondered if they really thought that by doing what we know now they were doing, that they were going to be able to get him out of office before the end of 2017. So I give you a little example of what I call hypocrisy in this city.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the economy.

You know, right now, inflation is at a record high. At the same time, what we are seeing is that Joe Biden's approval rating by the people all across this country is at a record low. And there is a connection.

This morning, the majority leader came to the floor of the Senate and said that Democrats were going to talk about inflation at their policy lunch today—today, February 15, 2022—13 months after Joe Biden took office.

Democrats have been in power for almost 13 months. They control the White House. They control the Senate. They control the House of Representatives. Ten months into this inflation crisis, what they are doing is putting forward gimmicks, not solutions.

They want to get past the upcoming election. They don't want to get to long-term solutions for our Nation.

On Thursday, the world found out that prices in the United States had risen at their fastest pace in 40 years, and of course that was the same day that Joe Biden's approval rating dropped to 40 percent.

The American people are getting squeezed financially. They are feeling the pain, and they are furious with President Biden. Since Joe Biden became President, wages have gone up slower than prices. Prices have gone up faster than wages. People can't keep up. It is hard to even stay even. As a result, the American family today can afford a lot less than it could the day that Joe Biden took office. Over the last year, inflation outpaced wages by over \$1,400. That is an over-\$100-a-month differential.

So who gets hurt the worst when your wages fall behind the increasing costs of Joe Biden's economy?

Well, it is families who are struggling; it is young couples; it is people living on fixed incomes; it is people trying to go to work every day to put

bread on the table. In other words, the people who are hurt the most are the people who can afford it the least. They are feeling the pain and paying the price every time they go to the grocery store and every time they go to the gas pump.

Big price increases have occurred in energy. CNBC reports that one in five American families couldn't afford to pay the energy bill over the past year. The same number, roughly, kept their homes at an uncomfortable and unhealthy temperature because they can't afford the cost of energy to heat them. Many have had to choose whether they are going to heat or to eat. Gas prices have gone up by over \$1 a gallon since Joe Biden became President.

American energy production is still not to the level that it was before the pandemic. We are still producing 1.2 million fewer barrels of oil each day than we were before the pandemic. We are not producing it here, but—oh, by the way—Vladimir Putin is selling 5 million barrels a day of crude oil in the international markets. This is a direct result of the anti-American energy policies of Joe Biden and his entire administration and the Democratic Party in this country. People understand simple supply and demand. When the supply goes down and the demand stays the same or goes up, prices go up as well.

It is also what happened with America's workforce. The Democrats created the worst labor shortage in American history. We have broken records for unfilled jobs in 5 of the last 12 months.

So when did it start?

Well, it started in March of this past year, when Democrats passed their \$2 trillion spending bill, which was not paid for and added to the debt, and the bill gave a bonus payment for people to stay home from work. People were getting paid more not to go to work than they were able to make had they gone to work.

What happened when the bonuses ran out?

Joe Biden imposed a national vaccine mandate, saying that if you don't get the vaccine, you lose your job. The vaccine mandate took a sledgehammer to the American workforce. According to one survey, half of America's small businesses couldn't find enough workers in just this past December. If you drive around Wyoming, you will see "Help Wanted" signs all around my home State. What happens when you have fewer workers? It means empty shelves and higher prices. When supply goes down, prices go up.

Now the opposite is also true. That is what we have seen with the value of the dollar. Last March, Democrats flooded the country with government cash. Now the dollar, in many people's wallets and pocketbooks, doesn't go as far as it did before.

Democrats passed the largest single spending bill in American history. They put \$2 trillion on the Nation's credit card. Republicans warned: Do

not do this. It will cause inflation. Democrats didn't listen. Every single Democrat in this Senate voted for it; every single Democrat voted for it; every single Republican voted against it; and Joe Biden signed it.

Since then, prices have gone up faster than wages. First, they said it was going to be temporary. Then, astonishingly, in July, Joe Biden said inflation was expected. He kind of bragged that he had seen it coming all along. Well, if he had seen it coming all along, why didn't he do something about it? All that this President has done is put jet fuel on the fire of inflation. He told us inflation would be transitory, and he said it month after month, after month, after month. He can't say it anymore. Oh, no. Inflation is here, and people are paying the price and feeling the pain.

Last week's inflation report should be a blaring siren to the Democrats in Washington, and I was so happy to hear the majority leader, this morning, saying, finally, today, at lunch, February 15, 2022, that the Democrats were going to start talking about inflation at their policy lunch today. They should all be suffering from significant indigestion.

This is a crisis, and Democrats are doing nothing about it. The Democrats borrowed trillions of dollars this year.

This week, Democrats in the House are talking about getting rid of the debt ceiling completely—of spending more. They are talking about a blank check, unlimited borrowing, and trillions and trillions more in spending, which will only mean higher and higher inflation.

Inflation will not go away on its own. Democrats need to stop the reckless spending. They need to stop the nationwide mandates. They need to stop shutting down American energy. The American people cannot afford any more records like the ones that Joe Biden is setting right now.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

NOMINATION OF GIGI SOHN

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I always strive to treat each and every nominee—regardless of party affiliation—with dignity and respect. I evaluate their credentials and make a decision on whether to support them based on their qualifications, their temperaments, and whether they will serve the interests of all of the American people.

That is actually why, in my role on the Judiciary Committee, I have voted for almost half of President Biden's nominees. In my judgment, some were qualified and deserved confirmation, and in my judgment, some weren't. Again, I evaluate each nominee on an independent and fair basis. With this in mind, I hope my colleagues will take seriously what I have to say today.

I rise to speak in opposition to, perhaps, one of the most radical nominees the President has put forward to date.